



**OFFICE OF  
INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Memorandum

SEP 19 2018

To: David Bernhardt  
Deputy Secretary

From: Mary L. Kendall *Mary L. Kendall*  
Deputy Inspector General

Subject: Report of Investigation – Alleged Abuse of Position by Secretary Zinke  
Case No. OI-PI-18-0192-I

We have completed an investigation into allegations that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke abused his position by having his wife, Lolita Zinke, and other family members travel with him in Government vehicles, asking that Lolita Zinke be appointed as a U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) volunteer in an effort to legitimize her travel, and requesting a Government cell phone for her. In addition, we examined his use of his security detail, including during a vacation to Turkey and Greece, as well as the purchase of secretarial challenge coins and an allegation that an employee resigned from her position because he made her walk his dog while at work.

We determined that DOI attorneys reviewed and approved trips in which Lolita Zinke and other individuals were permitted to ride in Government vehicles despite a DOI policy prohibiting this. We also confirmed that Secretary Zinke's staff had researched the implications of making his wife a DOI volunteer, but he denied that this was an attempt to circumvent the requirement to reimburse the Government for her travel.

While we found no prohibition against a security detail protecting Secretary Zinke during his vacation, we learned that the U.S. Park Police had no finalized policy governing the activities of the detail and that the protection cost the DOI over \$25,000. We also determined that he once told his security detail to drive an individual to the airport. The remaining allegations were unfounded.

We are referring the attached report of investigation to your office for any action deemed appropriate. Please provide us with a written response to the report and complete the attached Accountability Form within 90 days of the date of this memorandum. You may either email your response to [doioigreferrals@doioig.gov](mailto:doioigreferrals@doioig.gov), or mail it to:

Office of Inspector General  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
381 Elden Street, Suite 3000  
Herndon, VA 20170

We intend to publish the results of this investigation on our website, in redacted or summary form, no sooner than 30 days from the date of this memorandum. Within the next 10 business days, a representative from our Office of Investigations will contact you, or your designee, to discuss our report, the status of your response, and the method we intend to use to publish our investigative results.

If you have questions during your review, please contact Matthew Elliott, Assistant Inspector General, Office of Investigations, at (b) (7)(C).

Attachments (2)